

Piano Syllabus, 2015 Edition FAQs

CROSS-OVER

My student has just started working on Grade 10, and we have already chosen the repertoire. Can he still play music from the 2008 repertoire album next year? What will happen if he is not ready for the exam by the end of the cross-over period?

During the cross-over period (September 1, 2015 – August 31, 2016) students may perform works listed in either the 2008 or 2015 Piano Syllabus, and may “mix and match” selections from both syllabi in one program. After August 31, 2016, repertoire must be drawn from the Piano Syllabus, 2015 edition. If selections on your student’s program are no longer in the syllabus, you may use the “Teacher’s Choice” substitution for one etude and/or one repertoire selection as long as you follow the guidelines provided in the syllabus.

Why is there no cross-over for Technical Tests, Ear Tests up to Level 8 and Sight Reading?

The new requirements are a reflection of current pedagogical practices, and are designed to support student success. Both students and teachers will benefit from embracing the new requirements immediately.

EAR TESTS

Can you confirm the formation of the new seventh chords by giving examples?

Major-minor 7th = G B D F (dominant 7th)

Major-major 7th = G B D F#

Minor-minor 7th = G Bb D F

Diminished 7th = G# B D F

In each case, the first quality in the label refers to the triad, and the second quality to the interval of the seventh above the root. For example, in the dominant seventh chord, the triad is major, and the seventh above the root is minor — hence the major-minor seventh chord.

Why is the V7 chord also labeled as major-minor 7th

The dominant 7th, introduced in both Technical Tests and Ear Tests at Level 5 is in fact a major-minor seventh chord. While students generally identify it in terms of its function, it is helpful to also understand its structure as compared to other 7th chords.

For levels 9 & 10, how should students identify the chords? Do they need to specify whether each chord is major or minor?

Students are expected to identify each chord in the progression verbally by its Roman numeral/functional chord symbol designation – ie. “one”, “four”, “five” or “six”. They are not required to specify the quality.

SIGHT READING

Does the steady beat have to be tapped or clapped, or could it be performed verbally by counting out loud, or speaking “ta- ta- ta”?

The new requirements state clearly that students are required to *tap or clap the beat while tapping, clapping or speaking the rhythm*. The intent was for the pulse to be maintained with a distinct physical action, while the rhythm itself is clapped, tapped or performed verbally. This is to help students feel and maintain the beat with a physical movement, and will inform their rhythmic understanding not only in the context of sight reading, but in the performance of repertoire and etudes.

When clapping a rhythm in 6/8, should students tap 6 pulses per bar, or 2 beats per bar?

In the sight clapping requirements, 6/8 meter first appears at the Intermediate Levels (5-8). At these levels it can be helpful for students to tap the eighth note pulse, which is more likely to result in a steady and accurate performance. However, as long as a steady tempo is maintained, tapping either 6 pulses per bar, or 2 beats per bar is acceptable. In each case, accuracy and steadiness of the underlying beat is the most important factor for evaluation.

What if there is a pick-up note?

In cases where there is a pick-up note, students should tap one complete measure before the partial measure containing the pick-up note.

In Level 10, when harmonizing the playback melody, do the I, IV and V triads all need to be in root position, or could they follow typical voice leading patterns where IV and V might be in inversions?

Students may harmonize the melody using I, IV, and V in root position or inversions.

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

Why are there fewer keys required in the new technical tests?

The new requirements emphasize quality over quantity and are based on the understanding that technical tests are intended to support the performance of repertoire. The streamlined requirements will allow for better knowledge of the patterns and will encourage the development of greater facility and ease at the keyboard.

Why is the second inversion of the tonic chord labeled differently in the musical example on page 105 of the new piano syllabus? Is this an error?

Although the chord in question was labeled differently in the Piano Syllabus, 2008 Edition, the current Piano Syllabus has adopted the more widely accepted analysis of this chord. There is an article in the [Summer 2015 edition of Music Matters](#) that discusses the labeling of the cadential 6/4 chord and contains more detailed explanation for the use of this label.